

WEBER THOMPSON



MEETING MINUTES

TODAY'S DATE: 090611 MEETING #: Workshop #2
MEETING DATE:
PROJECT NAME: SLU Urban Design Framework PROJECT #: 09-016 SERVICE: C / UD

SUBJECT: Gateways, Hearts and Edges

LOCATION: Weber Thompson, 225 Terry Ave N. CR #4

ATTENDING:	CLIENT NAME	COMPANY NAME	INITIALS
	Marshall Foster	City of Seattle, OPM	MF
	Jim Holmes	City of Seattle, DPD	JH
	Darby Watson	City of Seattle, SDOT	DW
	Geoffrey Wentlandt	City of Seattle, DPD	GW
	Peter Dobrovolny	City of Seattle, DPD	PD
	Jackie Smith	City of Seattle, SCL	JS
	Catherine Benotto	Weber Thompson	CB
	Brian Steinburg	Weber Thompson	BS
	Jim Westcott	Weber Thompson	JW
	Dan Albert	Weber Thompson	DA
	Peter Greaves	Weber Thompson	PG
	Myer Harrell	Weber Thompson	MH
	Mahlon Clements	Bumgardner	MC
	John Pearson	LUOA	JP
	Lloyd Douglass	CNC	LD
	Sharon Coleman	Vulcan	SC

Introduction

Recap of Workshop #1:

1. The six selected “opportunity” topics were...
 - a. Gateways, Hearts, Edges
 - b. E-W Connections (now called Street Character and Connections)
 - c. Residential Zones
 - d. Lake Union Waterfront
 - e. Implementation strategies (Prototype Blocks)
 - f. Implementation strategies (Incentives)

Background Info: Identified Gateways / Hearts / Edges

1. **Gateways:** According to the SLU Design Guidelines: *“Gateways are transition locations, places that mark entry or departure points to a neighborhood for automobiles and pedestrians. They are sites that create opportunities for identification, a physical marker for the community to notice they are entering a special place. Methods to establish gateways should consider the site’s characteristics such as topography, views or surrounding building patterns.”*

The guidelines suggest: *“Reinforce community gateways through the use of architectural elements, streetscape features, landscaping and/or signage. Gateways can be defined through landscaping, artwork, and references to the history of the location that create a sense of place.”*

In Workshop #1, the following were identified as Gateways to the community...

- a. Valley Street acts as a filter into the neighborhood (Redefined Gateways at Fairview / Valley and 9th and Westlake in SLU Design Guidelines)
 - i. Trolley along Eastlake (Westlake future?)
 - ii. Pedestrians
 - iii. Cars
 - iv. To some degree recreational activities as well, bikes and kayaks.
 - b. Valley / Terry acts as the gateway to Lake Union Park. (New Gateway)
 - c. The I-5 ramps and the Mercer / Fairview intersection are a gateway to and from the neighborhood / city (Identified as Gateway in SLU Design Guidelines)
 - d. The intersection of Dexter and Mercer is a gateway to / from Uptown / SLU neighborhoods. (Identified as Gateway in SLU Design Guidelines)
 - e. Harrison St. at the new Aurora surface street is the gateway into and out of SLU on SR-99 (New Gateway)
 - f. Westlake and Denny (Identified as Gateway in SLU Design Guidelines)
 - g. Fairview and Denny (Identified as Gateway in SLU Design Guidelines)
2. **Hearts:** According to the SLU Design Guidelines: *“Heart locations serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. These locations provide anchors for the community as they have identity and give form to the neighborhood. Development at heart locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture.”*

In Workshop #1, the following were identified as Hearts of the community...

- a. Cascade Playground (identified as heart in the SLU Design Guidelines)
- b. Lake Union Park / 3 blocks fronting Valley Street south of the park. (the park is identified as heart in the SLU Design Guidelines, the adjacent blocks were added)
- c. The “Teardrop” site (This site, bounded by Mercer, 9th, Dexter and Roy, was labeled as an opportunity heart location).
- d. Denny Park (identified as heart in the SLU Design Guidelines)

Some streets were also identified as hearts. In subsequent conversations the notion of linear hearts was challenged by the very definition given in the Design guidelines. Some felt, not everything can be a heart, and too many hearts may dilute the very meaning. Others noted, however, that retail streets were an important part of creating active “hearts” and should be considered as part of the discussion. Portions of streets can define, or help reinforce a heart location, but entire streets may not be hearts. It was decided that street character would be studied in Workshop #3, with special attention to the particular streets and uses along them that help define heart locations.

The following are the linear hearts identified in Workshop #1.

- e. Westlake Avenue (identified as heart street in the SLU Design Guidelines, but study is deferred to Workshop #3)
- f. Fairview Avenue (identified as heart street in the SLU Design Guidelines, but study is deferred to Workshop #3)
- g. Terry Avenue (identified as heart street in the SLU Design Guidelines, but no study is required due to established design guidelines)
- h. 8th Avenue (new heart street, but study is deferred to Workshop #3)
- i. Valley Street from Westlake to Fairview (this is recognized in the design guidelines and the SM zoning)

Note: Harrison Street was not identified as a heart street in Workshop #1 even though it appears as one in the Design Guidelines. Due to the new Aurora tunnel lid, reconnecting Uptown and SLU, as well as future planning and investments that will connect W. Thomas Street with Myrtle Edwards Park, Thomas is emerging as the logical choice for emphasis. Whether or not it is a “heart” is undetermined.

3. Edges: Edges are not addressed specifically in the Design Guidelines.

In Workshop #1, the following were identified as Edges to the community:

- a. I-5 (hard edge with limited permeability)
- b. I-5 on/off ramps (hard edge with limited permeability)
- c. SR-99 currently from Denny extending north, but with the Bored Tunnel option for the viaduct replacement the tunnel will daylight at Harrison allowing E-W connections at John, Thomas, Harrison and E-W improvements at Mercer. Therefore north of Harrison is assumed to be an edge. (hard edge with limited permeability)
- d. Denny Street (change of grid orientation creates challenged permeability for pedestrians, bikes and vehicles)
- e. Lake Union
- f. Topographic Edges
 - Queen Anne – Lake Union

- SLU – Capital Hill
- John Street between Boren and Terry

Purpose of Workshop #2:

1. Provide guidance to future charette teams so that they can study charette topics in more detail
2. Provide guidance to the City of Seattle for the SLU EIS and revisions to the neighborhood plan, design guidelines, etc.

Goals of Workshop #2:

1. Define SLU specific responses to / meanings of Gateways, Hearts, Edges
 - a. Generally (Big Picture)
 - b. Specifically at certain locations
2. Provide guidance for character of space and activities within / along those spaces
3. Discover synergies or connections between Gateway, Heart, Edge conditions
4. Discover logical synergies with Gateways, Hearts, and Edges conditions and neighborhood goals.

Structure of Workshop #2:

1. Discuss Gateways, Hearts, and Edges (25 minutes)
 - a. What is appropriate response for each location?
 - b. Synergies
 - c. Opportunities
2. Study Gateways and Hearts (1-3/4 hours)
3. Study Edges (1/2 hour)

Team Reports

Team 1

Gateways:

In general gateways were discussed as identifiers of passage into or out of the neighborhood. It was felt that there were several ways to signify a gateway from obvious (the Chinese Gate in China Town) to subtle (neighborhood specific pavers, landscape or artwork). Gateways could also be architectural responses from the dramatic (towers at specific corners) to the more subtle (design excellence demanded through design review at specific corners / blocks). Some also felt gateways could be a manifestation of values (like significant expression of sustainable design features). Some gateways offer a welcome to the city as well and may be the first impression someone has of Seattle, these may be more auto-centric and scaled according to that speed and context. The sequence of arrival was also a topic of discussion that should inform each gateway scale and design.

1. Valley Street

- a. Westlake / Valley
 - NW corner of block bounded by Westlake, Valley, Terry, Mercer should be architecturally significant response to the axis and long views along Westlake Ave afforded by the park development.

- Cars move 1 way north just north of Valley, so this corner is also a signifier of leaving the neighborhood.
 - It was felt that the corner should reinforce the street frontage rather than create a plaza, or erode the edge.
 - It was felt that this corner could be a location for a signature building element allowing the urban form to create the gateway, but shadowing of the park is a concern as well.
- b. Eastlake / Valley
- NE corner of block bounded by Fairview, Valley, Boren, Mercer should be architecturally significant response to the axis and long views afforded by alignment of Eastlake Avenue.
 - It was felt that the corner should reinforce the street frontage rather than create a plaza, or erode the edge.
 - It was felt that this corner could be a location for a signature building element allowing the urban form to create the gateway, but shadowing of the park is a concern as well.
- c. Terry / Valley
- It was felt that the pedestrian crossing should be significant, celebrated and linking the park to plaza. Not just the white stripes on concrete roadway.
 - The group was supportive of continuing the Terry Avenue street design (specifically the widened sidewalk to the East side of Terry) all the way to Valley. The paving pattern introduced with the trolley project seems inadequate to create a special place or signify a gateway.
- d. Valley Street
- The character and distinction of Valley as a gateway street should be explored in workshop #3
 - Should the entire Valley street surface be pavers similar to Westlake park?

2. Mercer Street / Fairview

- a. Mercer Street Onramps
- Surplus WSDOT land should be used to create a transitional gateway.
 - These on/off-ramps signify a transition of speed (freeway speed to city street speed, acceleration or deceleration).
 - A major, urban scale, public art installation could produce a major gateway to Seattle and the neighborhood.
 - Perhaps even tie into the new median treatment of Mercer Street.
 - One idea was to partner with MOHAI to utilize the historic signs of Seattle collection that they have but don't know what to do with.

Hearts:

General discussion was focused on what a "heart" was, and whether the "teardrop site was truly one? We also discussed whether the Lake Union Park was a heart excluding the development blocks south of Valley, or including them. John Pearson said the area bounded by Westlake and Fairview was the commercial heart of the neighborhood. We also acknowledged that hearts are locations that require

access and permeability, so pedestrian and bicycle access should be a priority around heart locations. Scale and use of the hearts will dictate the design response and activities that are appropriate. Hearts can be national / regional / local / or neighborhood scale, some may be active use while others contemplative and quiet. Some hearts may be recognized as civic gathering spaces, others may be more reserved and a neighborhood “secret”.

1. Cascade Playground

a. Key words

- Residential / Community focused
- Active Use / Playfield / Athletics
- Kid friendly
- Human Services
- P-Patch
- Sustainable features, natural water filtration

b. Key Concepts

- The heart is complete, but the neighborhood development needs to support it as an urban room.
- Residential townhome stoops and some retail at corners should provide eyes on the park.
- Nearby completed developments (Alley 24) as well as proposed developments have developed cross block connectors and active , pedestrian friendly alleys. This pattern should be continued for blocks in the Pontius / Yale corridor as well as any other location where it is possible to create a secondary hierarchy of pathways and activities.
- Swale on Yale (/ Pontius?) should be continued south to the park.
- Utilize water filtration in the park for adjacent development roof run-off.
- P-Patch should be encouraged within development in neighborhood (as part of open space requirement?).
- Thomas should be a green street.

2. South Lake Union Park / Valley Street

a. Key words

- Maritime
- Semi-Active Use / Watersports / Picnic Destination
- Regional / National
- MOHAI
- Water Access

b. Key Concepts

- It was felt that eroding the corners of the blocks flanking Terry at Valley street would let the open space activity of the park flow across Valley street to the development south. The plaza size should be carefully considered, and generally it was felt that the size should allow for significant retail spillout and frontage, but not enough to create “programmable” spaces that may be a burden to the land owner or inactive for much of the year. The ultimate plaza spaces should work together E-W and N-S making the intersection active open space on all sides. Programming of this retail space should support the park activity as both a neighborhood and a regional destination.

- A strong Retail edge south of the park was deemed important.
- One idea was that since 2-way Mercer will reduce the mobility importance of Valley Street, it could be closed down for special events.
 - o 4th of July
 - o Street Fair
 - o MOHAI / Center for Wooden Boat Events
 - o Summer Lunch Concerts
 - o Summer Evenings

3. Denny Park

a. Key words

- Stitches together neighborhoods / could provide use or service to all
 - o SLU
 - o Uptown
 - o Denny Triangle
 - o Belltown
- Underutilized
- Transitional: Traditional park adding active uses (playground)
- Significant tree canopy

b. Key Concepts

- The Traditional park plan has always encouraged more contemplative uses
- Situated at busy edge condition along Denny
- More activity is called for, either through more active uses (play equipment or other family activity), redevelopment (addition of community center) or adjacent activity in future development (edge retail or residential stoops overlooking the park).
- Urban room defined by development to the North, East, and the redevelopment of the Parks Dept. building, but not development West of Dexter. The size of Dexter is too broad to define the room.
- Special attention to the block East of the park should be paid to reinforce Westlake, activate the park (with retail or residential stoops) and preserve views to the park from Westlake near 2200, and 2201 development.
- Would some thinning of park canopy be advisable to allow more uses and sun exposure?

4. The Teardrop (NOT A HEART)

a. Key words

- Development Opportunity
- Civic use
- Joint Development
- Not a heart

b. Key Concepts

- Is this location a heart? Probably not.
- Could be a part of a complementary civic use couplet with Denny Park. If Denny Park has the community Center, this site could contain a library, or school facility.
- Significant landscape, and terracing could create a transition / connection to the Lake Union Park
- 8th Avenue right of way should be preserved as pedestrian connection

- Private Development should reinforce street frontage along Dexter, Roy, 8th and Mercer, while civic use could be on East side of block fronting Mercer and 9th. Both developments should help buffer landscaped pedestrian route to Lake Union from Mercer St.

Edges:

General discussion addressed Edges as an access and permeability issue for the neighborhood.

1. Queen Anne – Lake Union

a. Key concepts

- Only 1 Pedestrian crossing of Aurora occurs north of Mercer until north of the Aurora bridge.
- Aurora, Dexter, and Westlake very channelized N-S with little permeability E-W.
- Development along Aurora and Dexter tends to block rather than encourage movement E-W.
- Current design proposals in the DRB process show significant pedestrian connections between Dexter and Westlake, this should become the norm and incentives should be encouraged to promote E-W movement.

2. Denny

a. Key concepts

- Enhanced and additional pedestrian crossings should occur at...
 - o The new Aurora lid
 - o Dexter
 - o 9th
 - o Westlake
 - o Terry
 - o Fairview
 - o Minor
- A significant setback allowing larger sidewalks, and significant landscaping should occur on the north side of Denny.

3. I-5

a. Key concepts

- Additional crossings of I-5 should be explored
- Denny and Lakeview should be enhanced for pedestrian and bicycle use.

4. I-5 onramps

a. Key concepts

- Is there any way to provide pedestrian crossing at Yale?
- If no permeability is possible, make a feature from all sides with significant landscape or gateway art treatment.

5. Lake frontage

a. Key concepts

- Plan a lakefront walking path, and market it so people know it's there. Wayfinding will be critical for success.

- Eastlake should receive the same design attention that Westlake did for parking lots, bike routes and landscaping to enhance the sequence of arrival.

Team 2

Gateways:

Scale of gateways was discussed with a difference in approach between regional, city center, or local. Vehicular vs. pedestrian gateways were also discussed. If a new pedestrian crossing was introduced at Thomas, it could be a gateway. Is Lakeview a gateway?

1. Valley Street

- Westlake / Valley
 - Intersection is a pivot point and may be location for special paving in streetscape. Special paving/streetscape could be used throughout SLU as a brand.
- Eastlake / Valley
 - Intersection is a pivot point and may be location for special paving in streetscape.
- Terry / Valley
 - Intersection is a pivot point and may be location for special paving in streetscape.
 - The group was supportive of continuing the Terry Avenue street design (specifically the widened sidewalk to the East side of Terry) all the way to Valley. The paving pattern introduced with the trolley project seems inadequate to create a special place or signify a gateway.
 - Utilize "Scramble signals"
- Valley Street
 - The character and distinction of Valley as a gateway street should be explored in workshop #3

2. Mercer Street / Fairview

- Mercer Street Onramps
 - Big traffic calming – Slow down – Decompress.
 - Sense of welcome to the city / neighborhood.
 - Statement about sustainability. Perhaps PV as signature element
 - Mercer is grandest boulevard in Seattle.
 - Include art (exit signs as art opportunity?).
 - Significant landscaping, urban forest opportunity.
 - Keep billboards as artwork or gateway.
 - Corners of blocks flanking Mercer, at the intersection with Fairview should be architecturally significant to encourage a gateway effect through urban form.

3. Mercer Street / Dexter

- Key Concepts
 - Corners of blocks flanking Mercer, at the intersection with Dexter should be architecturally significant to encourage a gateway effect through urban form.

4. Denny

- Key Concepts

- Denny / Fairview = Opportunity
 - o Utilize existing billboard as icon for art or signage.
- Westlake / Denny = Complete

5. Harrison at Aurora

b. Key Concepts

- Needs to be significant, can't just be a piece of infrastructure.
- New Aurora could contain a string of "Green" nodes as a processional gateway. Nodes would be at Harrison, Thomas and John.
- Tunnel exhaust structure could be major civic art piece that acts as part of gateway. Cover edges with Planting, trees from above.

Hearts:

Discussed 4 different scales of heart locations; regional, SLU focus, local, and smaller plazas on private properties. The Potlatch (Lake to Bay trail) should be considered. Linking the open spaces (civic and private) may provide a tour route. Use neighborhood specific paving to define pedestrian realm and slow traffic.

1. Cascade Playground

a. Key words

- Neighborhood
- Hidden
- Local

b. Key Concepts

- The heart is complete, but the neighborhood development needs to support it as an urban room. Focus on building around edges; needs more park benches around perimeter.

2. South Lake Union Park / Valley Street

a. Key words

- Regional

b. Key Concepts

- Strong street frontage with active retail/restaurants along Valley is important; perhaps wider sidewalk to accommodate cafes.
- Breaking down blocks just south of park to make E-W, N-S through block pedestrian connections is important. Create pedestrian only places within development to enliven the area and reinforce as a heart location.
- Boren Street as a Woonerf
- Continue Terry Avenue design through to Valley; create a plaza with artwork at southeast corner of Terry/Valley.

3. Denny Park

a. Key words

- Unrealized
- Conspicuous
- Significant, City scale relevance

b. Key Concepts

- Serves also as gateway
- Needs most attention
- Lighting improvements
- Include community center, library or public school incubator.
- Urban Room is important to reinforce with active uses and eyes on the park.
- "Modern upgrades" + Historic (1st City) Park
- Park as Museum (Denny, Duwamish, Olmstead, etc.)
- Needs Programming
- Define with strong, residential dominant edges across the streets; continuous framework for park.
- Turn parking on south side to parallel to gain more park space

4. The Teardrop

- a. Key words
 - Future
 - local
- b. Key Concepts
 - Civic Uses? Library, schools (because of land area) and potential new residential.
 - Include civic open space (i.e. ability to gather, free speech, protest)
 - Envisioned block to be split into 2 developments linked by a skybridge, preserving 8th Avenue as a pedestrian connection
 - Opportunity to include folly or public art on 8th Avenue Axis to emphasize visual connection to Denny Park. Since this street does not have a view to the lake, it can have an architectural feature terminate the vista up and down 8th.
 - Wide / activated sidewalks on North and South side important to connect Dexter to Lake Union.

5. Small hearts (Plazas on private land)

- a. Key words
 - Gathering; need many of these along with more mid block pedestrian crossing
 - More P-Patches
 - Are these Civic focused space, public land ?
- b. Key Concepts
 - Civic vs. Open spaces (not equal)
 - o Civic Spaces allow full civic rights to speech and gathering. (like the south side of Westlake Plaza)
 - o Open Spaces on private land can restrict activity and speech (like the north side of Westlake Plaza)
 - o Private Plazas may provide active space, but should not be relied on for all facets of civic activity.
 - o P-Patches: consider 8th street as a linear P patch using the parking strip
 - o P-Patch, vertical garden hear on John connection between Boren and Terry

Edges:

1. Denny

a. Key concepts

- Can a pedestrian crossing of Denny be made on axis with 8th Avenue at Denny Park?
- Terry Avenue pedestrian crossing is logical
- Fairview has most potential to improve edge permeability and Gateway conditions

2. I-5

b. Key concepts

- Additional crossings of I-5 should be explored
- Denny and Lakeview should be enhanced for pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Thomas connection is important opportunity for continuity from Cap Hill to Bay.

3. Lake frontage

c. Key concepts

- Plan a lakefront walking path, and market it so people know it's there. Wayfinding will be critical for success; perhaps use existing billboards as wayfinding
- Eastlake should receive the same design attention that Westlake did for parking lots, bike routes and landscaping to enhance the sequence of arrival.

Other General Comments or Observations:

1. Vulcan representatives stated that access to the developments along Valley Street will occur from Terry / Boren, not Westlake, Valley, Mercer or Fairview.
2. Boren is disconnected at Mercer. This will affect it's intensity of use south of Mercer and may allow for a very pedestrian use (woonerf) north of Mercer.
3. Terry should have increased retail frontage near the lake with continuity of green street and artwork.
4. Mercer street design should be modified to allow crosswalks on both sides of 8th and both sides of Boren.
5. Mercer street should contain strong retail and activity to make more pedestrian.
6. Linear P-Patches may be way to signify the residential focused streetscape.
7. Use art installation as well as architecture to define gateways.
8. Lake to Bay Trail
 - o May use hearts as nodes, key streets as pathways
 - o One proposed path would be Lake Union Park to the teardrop site civic campus, south along 8th to Thomas street, West on Thomas, through Seattle Center to the proposed W. Thomas overpass to Myrtle Edwards Park.
 - o Alternate route would take Thomas West to Broad, and Broad to the waterfront via the Olympic Sculpture park.
 - o Consideration of these routes should be studied further in future workshops.

ALL After reviewing these minutes, if you have any comments or corrections, please notify us within seven days of receipt or we will assume you concur with the above.

